United Nations A/70/256

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 August 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 24 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Women in development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/227 on women in development, the present report highlights measures taken at the national level to (a) formulate a gender-responsive macroeconomic framework; (b) ensure decent work for women; (c) foster women's entrepreneurship; (d) provide social protection to women; and (e) effectively support the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work by women. Recommendations are provided for consideration by the Assembly.

* A/70/150.

15-13002 (E) 010915

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 68/227 on women in development, the General Assembly recognized the links between gender equality, human rights, poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Assembly also emphasized the need to link policies on economic and social development to ensure that all people, and particularly women, benefit from inclusive economic growth and development, expressing deep concern about the adverse impact of the financial and economic crisis and stressing the need to maintain adequate levels of funding for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition, the Assembly urged Member States, the entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to accelerate their efforts and provide adequate resources to increase the voice and full and equal participation of women in all decision-making bodies at the highest levels of government and in the governance structures of international organizations. This commitment builds women's capacity as agents of change and empowers them to participate actively and effectively in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national development, poverty eradication and environmental policies, strategies and programmes.

2. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventieth session a report on the implementation of resolution 68/227, including on integrating a gender perspective into national development strategies. The present report places particular emphasis on policies that have a catalytic impact on sustainable development, gender equality and women's empowerment in the light of the post-2015 development agenda and the outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015. Based on contributions received from Member States and the United Nations system,[1] the present report reviews measures taken by Governments and support provided by the United Nations system to address macroeconomic frameworks, decent work, entrepreneurship, social protection and unpaid care work. It concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

II. Background

3. The international community has long recognized the human rights imperative of addressing women's economic empowerment. International human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, establish legally binding obligations on States to address gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

[1] Contributions were received from the Governments of Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lithuania, Norway, Peru, Qatar, Senegal, Singapore, Spain and Togo. The following United Nations entities provided inputs Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

4. The collective responsibility for achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment requires specific policy attention and action. The following policies have been highlighted in the present report as being critical for addressing the issue of women in development: creating an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment through pro-poor, gender-responsive macroeconomic frameworks; ensuring that women have access to productive resources, decent work opportunities and adequate social protection; and recognizing, reducing and redistributing the burden of unpaid care work. Reflection on these measures in national development strategies is therefore particularly urgent and timely.

5. The effects of the recent global financial and economic crises continue to be felt across the globe. While most affected countries have experienced some improvements, global recovery has remained slow, and there has been insufficient employment generation and wage growth. This is particularly true for most advanced economies in North America, Europe and Asia, where wage growth is minimal despite strong gains in labour productivity.[2] According to the most recent projections by the International Monetary Fund (IMF),[3] global growth is still weak and unlikely to recover sufficiently in the next two years.

6. While the pace of global recovery remains low (3.4 per cent in 2014 and 3.5 per cent in 2015), the world's economy is not expected to generate enough jobs to reduce the overall unemployment rate, which stood at 5.9 per cent in 2014.[4] When new job seekers are factored in, the world economy will need to create 280 million jobs — 200 million in developing countries alone — in the next five years to compensate for the loss of jobs during the crisis and to absorb the increase in the new labour force. Women and youth remain particularly disadvantaged, with unemployment and underemployment rates disproportionately higher than men's across the globe.[5]

7. Addressing the current high and sustained levels of unemployment will require coordinated global macroeconomic policy measures to reflate economies and stimulate growth. These policies should also put gender equality and access to decent employment at the forefront of economic growth objectives to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. In addition to job creation, efforts must be made to generate decent jobs for men and women, as current trends suggest that many new entrants to the labour market will be unable to secure formal wage employment and will instead be trapped in informal or insecure and low-paid work lacking basic social protection.[6] Evidence has shown that social protection schemes are instrumental in helping the poor, especially poor women in low-, middle- and high-income countries, to cope with not only the job losses associated with the crises, but also the lack of employment opportunities during this long and slow recovery.[7]

---

[2] International Labour Organization, *Global Wage Report 2014/15: Wages and Income Inequality* (Geneva, 2015).

[3] International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook 2015: Uneven Growth-Short-and Long Term Factors* (Washington, D.C., 2015).

[4] International Labour Organization, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trend 2015* (Geneva, 2015).

[5] International Labour Organization, *World Employment Social Outlook* (Geneva, 2015).

[6] International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of a Jobless Recovery* (Geneva, 2015).

[7] International Labour Organization, *World of Work Report 2014: Developing with Jobs* (Geneva, 2014).

8. Environmental degradation and climate change compound the current economic crisis and continue to represent daunting challenges for the world as a whole. Soil erosion, deforestation and desertification continue to have a severe impact on agriculture and increase the vulnerability of poor rural households (see A/69/156). In this context, it is essential to ensure that the most vulnerable are reached by sustainable development planning and assistance and that the gains made in terms of resilience are safeguarded. For women, building resilience to economic, social or environmental shocks is inextricably related to attaining secure access to land and productive resources, financing, education, decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as the ability to accumulate and build assets.[8]

9. The provision of social protection and policies that promote the reconciliation of family and work responsibilities can also contribute to the economic recovery and foster sustainable development. However, in order for women and girls to realize their rights and drive inclusive economic growth through their full and equal participation in the economy, it is of paramount importance to recognize the burden of unpaid care work on women across countries while recognizing the right to care and be cared for. The unequal distribution, intensity and lack of recognition of unpaid care work undermines the dignity of women who are caregivers, obstructs their enjoyment of several human rights on an equal basis with men, hinders progress towards gender equality and entrenches their disproportionate vulnerability to poverty throughout their lifetime.

III. Macroeconomic framework

10. The report by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) entitled *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016* comprehensively demonstrated why macroeconomic policy matters for gender equality and issued an appeal to make the design and implementation of macroeconomic policy gender responsive.[9] To that end, three key constraints that have been overlooked by the current macroeconomic paradigm must be addressed, namely (a) gender biases in macroeconomic analysis and the narrow goals of macroeconomic policy; (b) the insufficient focus in macroeconomic policy on employment creation; and (c) the prevalence of restrictive macroeconomic policy choices, which reduce countries' fiscal space and the funds necessary to support gender equality initiatives.

11. Integrating a gender perspective into macroeconomic policies should be part of efforts to stimulate recovery, sustain job growth and ensure that women benefit from and contribute to development, particularly in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis. A deeper understanding of the gendered impact of restrictive monetary and fiscal policy and reductions in social spending undertaken to manage public debt may reveal the policy options that contribute most to eradicating poverty, ending women's economic exclusion and reducing the multiple inequalities that impinge on the rights and agency of women.

[8] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *Shocks, Assets and Social Protection: A Gendered Analysis of Ecuador, Ghana, and Karnataka, India* (New York, 2015).

[9] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* (New York, 2015).

12. Recent research on the consequences of restrictive fiscal policies underscores the larger-than-expected effect of austerity on growth in various countries. It supports the view that recovery efforts can benefit from proactive and ambitious public policies that are premised on gender equality and human development as well as growth.[9] Cuts in public spending primarily affected women, children, the elderly and other marginalized members of society, and this may hold back the very growth and restructuring that greater gender equality could create. Indeed, a recent review of IMF data on public expenditure and adjustment measures shows that, since 2013, 94 of 181 countries cut public spending as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), at least 131 of 181 countries are expected to cut public spending as a share of GDP in 2015, and this trend is forecasted to continue through at least 2016 and affect 6.3 billion people, or 90 per cent of the global population by the end of 2015.[10] While the retrenchment of public services has not been analysed extensively in developing countries, evidence shows that the failure to expand social protection measures can disproportionately affect women's ability to participate fully in development.[9] The forecast for the medium term at the global level also points towards a tightening of monetary policy worldwide, which could have a disproportionate impact on women in both developed and developing countries. This is especially true for women entrepreneurs, who, even in the best-case scenario, face significant hurdles in access to credit and other financial services.[11]

13. Gender inequality constrains the achievement of women's well-being because it translates into unequal economic, political and social power. This power differential inhibits not only equality in opportunities in terms of access to education, health care and other productive resources, but also women's agency and voice. Moreover, women's relative lack of economic opportunities in developing and developed countries inhibits economic growth. Consequently, reducing gender inequality and improving the status of women may contribute to higher rates of economic growth and greater macroeconomic stability.[11]

14. Mainstreaming gender analysis into national development policies and planning will inform the way in which macroeconomic policy can be used to increase investment in the sectors where women are concentrated, expand financing for women's businesses and own-account work, and improve the terms and conditions of work for women, in particular the poorest and most marginalized women.

15. In the current context of discussions on the post-2015 development framework and the sustainable development goals, there are calls for a shift towards a green economy aimed at ending extreme poverty, improving human well-being and enhancing social equity while reducing carbon dependency and ecosystem degradation. However, most of the employment gains from a shift to a green economy will not automatically benefit women because of existing segregation by sex in labour markets. Many of the areas targeted by green employment, including energy, construction and basic industry, are male-dominated, and recent trends indicate that sectoral segregation is increasing. Extending employment opportunities for women in a green economy will require targeting skills development and

[10] Matthew Cummins and Isabel Ortiz, "The Age of Austerity: A Review of Public Expenditures and Adjustment Measures in 181 Countries", Initiative for Policy Dialogue and the South Centre working paper (March 2013).

[11] The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, *2014 Report on Women and Entrepreneurship* (Babson College and London Business School, 2014).

education for women as well as ensuring equal pay and the elimination of discrimination and segregation in labour markets.[11]

16. Ongoing discussions on financing for development recognize that expanding fiscal space must be part of the commitments to the proposed sustainable development goals. While gender equality is now widely recognized as central to human development, much more needs to be done to ensure that all aspects of development financing, whether domestic or international, fully recognize women's economic contribution and support their economic security and rights. To that end, policy alternatives must include ways to promote both employment generation and productive growth, reduce unfair disparities in income and assets, moderate the vulnerabilities associated with profound changes in the global economy, protect against environmental and social risks, promote gender-responsive budgeting and explore innovative sources of financing. Financing for development could be facilitated through various measures, including broadening the tax base and increasing efficiency in tax collection. Additional measures to increase the available resources for development investment, such as reducing tax evasion and avoidance, improving and simplifying taxpayer registration and broadening the tax base, can increase fiscal space. Moreover, as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development underscores:

> We will work to improve the fairness, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of our tax systems, including by broadening the tax base and continuing efforts to integrate the informal sector into the formal economy in line with country circumstances.

Such an approach has great potential to benefit women entrepreneurs and own-account workers, particularly where this expanded fiscal space is used to finance social protection and increase access to decent work.

IV. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to promote a gender-responsive macroeconomic framework

17. Member States have taken a range of actions linked to the creation of gender-responsive macroeconomic frameworks through the integration of gender analysis into policies and programmes related to macroeconomic stability, sectoral development, budgeting, taxation and investment, and data collection to monitor and evaluate the impact of policy. For example, Senegal has mainstreamed gender considerations into its national plan to achieve the status of emerging economy by 2035 and has a national strategy for gender equality for the 2005-2015 period. In Cambodia, growth strategies promote women's role in the economy through gender mainstreaming action groups in each ministry. The economic development strategies in Togo contain provisions to ensure that women are included and targeted in development planning and budgeting. Canada, Norway, Peru and Spain, among others, have sectoral gender mainstreaming policies. For instance, since 1995, Canada has been conducting a gender-based analysis to assess the potential gender impact of all future legislation, policies and programmes. Canada has recently adopted the term "GBA+", or "gender-based analysis plus" to highlight the fact that aspects of diversity such as age, location, income, ethnicity, disability and religion are being factored into gender-based analysis.

18. In Egypt, the Ministry of Finance works with UN-Women on gender-responsive budgeting to identify specific budget lines that can address gender equality issues. In addition, tax exemption benefits, which were previously only offered to men, are now extended to women. Norway includes gender equality annexes in the fiscal budget. In Spain, gender impact analysis is required by law. The Ministry of Finance and Economy of Peru practices gender-responsive budgeting and has targeted gender inequality issues that affect men and women throughout their lives, as well as the eradication of poverty and of violence against women. Women's empowerment is a priority cross-cutting issue for Italy's development cooperation, which focuses on sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. Italy supports gender mainstreaming in programmes on food security, the environment, vocational training, job access and entrepreneurship. In Japan, new development cooperation charter recognizes the importance of women's participation in every phase of development and of ensuring gender equity in development outcomes.

19. UN-Women and the World Bank supported the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in 2013 and 2014 in drafting a national action plan on gender, based on regional consultations with government and civil society, including gender equality advocates. UN-Women also helped the national statistics office in the Sudan to fully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in the national household survey questionnaire. The survey results will help to ensure that macroeconomic policy initiatives and the upcoming 2015-2016 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper include gender perspectives. The Evidence and Data for Gender Statistics (EDGE) initiative, implemented by UN-Women, the Statistics Division and other partners, continues to train national statisticians; support the generation of comparable gender indicators on health, education, employment, entrepreneurship and asset ownership; and facilitate mainstreaming gender statistics in national statistical systems.

20. The new Strategic Framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) emphasizes gender as a cross-cutting priority across the five strategic objectives for 2010-2019, with rural women as an important target group, and has identified policy and programmatic action to improve their situation. To contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, the gender work done by FAO supports national, regional, and global efforts to address gender equality concerns in macroeconomic policy, legal frameworks, coordination mechanisms and information systems for agriculture and food security. This is done through knowledge generation, the sharing of experiences and good practices, advocacy, capacity development for relevant institutions and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues and processes.

V. Decent work

21. The continuing global financial crisis has a clear gender dimension. Globally, female unemployment stood at 6.4 per cent in 2014, in contrast to 5.7 per cent for men. In fact, in 2014, unemployment rates were higher for women than for their male counterparts in all regions except East Asia, Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Young women and men have been particularly affected, with a global youth unemployment rate estimated at 13 per cent in 2014 (up from 12.6 per cent in 2013), which translated into 73.6 million

unemployed young people, an increase of 4.1 million since 2007.[12] At the regional level, in 2013, young women were more likely than young men to be unemployed, with a gender gap in youth unemployment that ranged from about 2 percentage points in the 28 countries of the European Union, Central and South-Eastern Europe and CIS, South-East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, to 5.4 percentage points in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a staggering 18 percentage points in the Middle East and North Africa.[13]

22. Efforts to combat chronic unemployment and underemployment must also focus on the quality of employment, in order to deliver productive and decent work for women. Recent evidence shows that nearly half of the world's working women continue to be in vulnerable employment, trapped in insecure jobs and often outside the purview of labour legislation.[14] As at 2013, the share of women in vulnerable employment (49.1 per cent) exceeded the corresponding share for men (46.9 per cent). Women were far more likely than men to be in vulnerable employment in North Africa (54.7 per cent versus 30.2 per cent), the Middle East (33.2 per cent versus 23.7 per cent), South Asia (80.9 per cent versus 74.4 per cent), South-East Asia and the Pacific (63.1 per cent versus 56 per cent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (nearly 85.5 per cent versus 70.5 per cent), which, of all the regions, has the highest share of vulnerable employment, at 77.4 per cent of total employment. This reveals that most of the job gains in the recovery have been low-paying and lacking in benefits, and highlights how the non-enforcement of core labour standards propels a "race to the bottom", which ultimately exacerbates poverty and exclusion among women.

23. Goal 8 of the proposed sustainable development goals aims at promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Collective action by women's organizations and trade unions is an integral part of and contributes to achieving decent work. Supporting collective action and fundamental rights at work will enable organized groups to defend women's right to decent work. Collective bargaining can play a critical role in expanding decent work opportunities for women by ensuring that their concerns are taken into consideration during contract negotiations. Such concerns include equal pay for equal work, flexible working hours, pension schemes, paid parental leave for both men and women, the provision of on-site childcare services for medium to large enterprises or subsidies for childcare services, and affordable health care.[15] Unions can be key partners promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in developed and developing countries.

24. Employment programmes and improved labour market intermediation services can increase women's access to decent work. For instance, public work programmes are effective ways to simultaneously address chronic, long-term unemployment and ensure the terms and conditions necessary for decent work. Active labour market

[12] International Labour Organization, *World of Work Report 2014: Developing with Jobs* (Geneva, 2014).

[13] International Labour Organization, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market* (Geneva, 2014).

[14] International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of a Jobless Recovery* (Geneva, 2014). "Vulnerable employment" includes own-account workers and contributing family workers, two employment groups characterized by higher poverty rates and limited social protections.

[15] Janine Berg, ed., *Labour Markets, Institutions and Inequality: Building Just Societies in the 21st Century* (International Labour Office/Edward Elgar, 2015).

policies also have a critical role to play in helping to expand decent work opportunities for women. While men are more evenly distributed across various sectors of the economy, the burden of unpaid care work in combination with cultural norms and expectations about women's economic roles have kept women clustered in very few sectors of the economy. Such constraints, coupled with a lack of access to productive resources, make women less likely to enter non-traditional sectors of the economy, many of which tend to expand through increased investment in productive capacities or new trade opportunities. As a result, active labour market policies and job training and job matching programmes should be designed to take women's disproportionate care responsibilities into account and offer services to relieve care burdens and allow women to participate effectively and easily in these programmes.[9]

VI. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to address the issue of decent work for women

25. Member States have adopted a number of strategies for gender-responsive labour market legislation and policies to ensure equal access to full and productive employment and decent work for all. These strategies include increasing skills development by offering vocational training to women job seekers (Azerbaijan and Egypt); gender mainstreaming national employment strategies (Cambodia and Jordan); enacting laws prohibiting harassment (Jordan and Singapore); and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of political views, membership in trade unions, age and part-time or temporary employment status (Norway).

26. In order to enforce women's rights as guaranteed in national labour laws and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, some countries, such as Egypt, have set up equality units and audit and complaint systems within their ministries, to address discrimination and raise awareness. Cuba has recently enacted a new labour code that has a chapter dedicated to the protection of the rights of women workers. In addition to implementing programmes that facilitate women's access to decent work, Colombia has affirmative action policies and mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against women in the workplace. Moreover, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Italy have all ratified the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Jordan amended its labour law in 2013 to conform to international labour standards regarding domestic work, reducing statutory working hours to 8 hours a day and granting 14 days of annual leave and one day a week of rest.

27. Jordan has decent work at the centre of its national employment strategy. Women's access to employment and decent work has received special emphasis, with broad-based measures to increase women's employment, reduce gender gaps in the workplace, increase social protection and social security coverage and guarantee women's rights at work. Cambodia has a national decent work programme and factory-level data on compliance with labour norms and standards. Governments have taken measures to enable historically marginalized groups of women to access the labour market. For example, Canada has programmes and funds for aboriginal women and women with disabilities. In Spain, the social inclusion plan targets the social and economic integration of immigrant women, and other programmes help

women survivors of violence to enter the labour market. Singapore offers an employment credit for hiring older workers. Azerbaijan held a labour fair to help rural women obtain work placements. In Qatar, while women have been limited to sectors such as education and health, increasing numbers of women are entering fields that men have historically dominated.

VII. Women's entrepreneurship

28. In its resolution on women in development (resolution 68/227), the General Assembly stressed the importance of developing national strategies for the promotion of sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities by creating a climate that is conducive to increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and the size of their businesses, ensuring equal access to financial instruments, providing women with training and advisory services in business, administration and information and communications technologies, facilitating networking and information-sharing and increasing their participation in advisory boards and other forums so as to enable them to contribute to the formulation and review of policies and programmes being developed by financial institutions. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's report on women and entrepreneurship, regardless of country, men are more likely to be involved in entrepreneurial activity than women.[11] An analysis of entrepreneurial behaviour across the globe yields a clear picture of a gender gap in venture creation and ownership activity. The entrepreneurial gender gap exhibits varying dimensions and characteristics in the ownership of both new and established businesses across countries, regardless of income level or type of activity. Addressing these constraints will require consistent and interlinked policy measures over the long term to increase women's access to entrepreneurial skills training and build institutional frameworks and support services — from access to finance to the provision of child and elder care services — that help women to expand their businesses.

29. Although important, expanding women's access to credit and entrepreneurial skills would only address supply-side constraints. Such policies must be complemented by policies that address demand-side constraints, which prevent many women-owned small businesses from accessing markets and moving up supply chains. One means of increasing demand for women's products and services is through government and private sector procurement initiatives. Both the private and public sectors can increase their commitments to earmark a share of all contracts to women-owned small businesses. Such initiatives are already being undertaken in a number of developed and developing countries, but challenges remain in reaching small- and medium-sized women-owned businesses.

30. Mentoring can provide business guidance and emotional support to women entrepreneurs and could play a critical role in encouraging more women to seek entrepreneurial opportunities. A recent report shows that the organizational effectiveness of companies greatly benefits from increasing leadership opportunities for women, and companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all dimensions of organizational effectiveness.[16] However, a recent global survey of companies found that only 17.3 per cent had a top-level

[16] McKinsey & Company, *Women Matter 2014: GCC Women in Leadership — from the first to the norm* (2014). Available from www.mckinsey.com/features/women_matter.

female manager, with variations across regions, including East Asia and Pacific (29.3 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (21.1 per cent), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (18.7 per cent), sub-Saharan Africa (15.2 per cent), South Asia (8.4 per cent), and the Middle East and North Africa (5.1 per cent).[17] Finally, ensuring that women entrepreneurs and the self-employed have access to social protection and facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal sector is critical for ensuring that self-employment and own-account work is also decent work.[18]

VIII. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to promote women's entrepreneurship

31. Governments recognize the importance of entrepreneurship for women's economic empowerment, poverty alleviation and economic development, and some have developed national strategies that promote entrepreneurship and increases in the number of women entrepreneurs and the size of their businesses. Jordan has a microfinancing policy framework that directs a range of financial services, non-financial business development services, business incubation support, capacity-building and training to women entrepreneurs. Canada has established an online platform, a national forum and financing for women-owned businesses. Norway aims to strengthen women's positions in industrial value chains, facilitating skills development, networking, mentoring and access to markets for women entrepreneurs. Cuba has enacted a national programme that supports self-employment and helps reduce barriers for the expansion of women's enterprises. Qatar supports a businesswomen's association, which has developed new strategies to promote its role locally, regionally and internationally. Azerbaijan, Cambodia and Egypt have created business development centres in rural areas, which offer skills training and support microprojects. Similarly, Togo has programmes to promote women's entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas. Singapore offers grants for vocational entrepreneurship training and funds for start-ups. Senegal specifically targets women entrepreneurs through enhanced credit facilities, the development of agricultural value chains, entrepreneurial skills building and financial literacy to help to promote small- and medium-sized businesses. Spain's businesswomen support programme provides information for women's self-employment opportunities both in person and online.

32. The Dominican Republic provides loans for low-income women, regardless of their economic and social situation, through banks specifically for women entrepreneurs. Peru is planning studies on improving women's access to credit as a tool to promote economic development and women's empowerment. Governments also foster women's entrepreneurship through public-private partnerships. Cambodia is exploring public-private partnership opportunities to improve the delivery of business development services in their women's development centres. Spain incentivizes public-private partnerships that support women's economic

[17] The World Bank Group, *Enterprise Surveys* (2014).

[18] International Labour Organization, *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy*, International Labour Conference, one-hundred and third session, Report V (1) (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2014).

empowerment. Japan and Lithuania held international conferences to discuss women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. Countries have also taken measures to increase the number of women in management and corporate board positions. Canada has set a goal of 30 per cent representation by 2019, and Spain has implemented initiatives to promote women's leadership on boards and recognize companies for their gender equality achievements.

33. A number of countries focus on women's entrepreneurship in their development assistance, including Canada, Italy, Lithuania, Norway and Spain.

34. It is notable, however, that limited data are available on women's entrepreneurship, since few Member States report national-level, sex-disaggregated data on entrepreneurship. To fill this gap, Azerbaijan carried out a survey of rural women entrepreneurs to assess how much land, livestock and equipment women farmers owned. Data from the Cambodian national listing of business establishments and national economic and agriculture censuses are available online and can help to measure women's entrepreneurship.

35. UN-Women works with Governments, women's organizations and the private sector in Bolivia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Iraq, Mozambique, the Niger, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Uruguay and Zimbabwe, providing technical assistance and training to enhance women's entrepreneurship skills. UN-Women is also increasing access to finance for women-owned small businesses in Bolivia, Morocco and Serbia, facilitating market access in Ethiopia, and increasing access to information about public procurement in Kenya. FAO is generating knowledge and developing guidelines to support Member States in ensuring that women and small producers benefit from investments in value chains. To this end, FAO is supporting work to increase women's involvement and improve their positioning within the value chain in dairy value chains in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda; cotton value chains in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru; cassava and quinoa value chains in Belize and Bolivia; and maize in Guatemala.

IX. Social protection for women

36. Achieving broad access to social protection services such as income transfers and publicly provided services is a goal included in various international frameworks and proposed sustainable development goal 1.3, in which States are urged to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. Women benefit from social protection because they are disproportionately poor, but also because they bear the disproportionate burden of caring for children, the sick, the elderly and vulnerable people in the absence of publicly provided social services. Universal access to essential affordable social services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, food security, housing and others, defined in line with national priorities that respond to key gaps and reflect existing fiscal space, would not only help to respond to income insecurity from job losses, but also prevent those already working from falling into poverty. To be effective, such measures must be part of broader macroeconomic and sectoral policies that focus public spending on employment creation, income security and decent work for women.[9] Policy coherence between social protection

policies, on the one hand, and employment, labour market and wage policies, on the other, is essential in order to ensure that social security systems are efficient, effective, inclusive and sustainable. Mounting evidence suggests that social protection measures were instrumental in helping cushion vulnerable populations from the impact of the latest global economic crisis, serving as a macroeconomic stabilizer by fuelling domestic demand, mitigating poverty and reducing social exclusion.[19]

37. The 2009 Social Protection Floor Initiative set forth a unique global framework focused on achieving universal coverage.[20] According to ILO, many developing and emerging countries have successfully taken measures to implement the Initiative.[21] Among these, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Ghana, Haiti, India, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Rwanda, South Africa and Viet Nam have introduced important elements such as family benefits and access to education and health services. Cambodia, Ecuador, Burkina Faso, Thailand, Togo and Benin have recently committed to start building their own social protection floors.

38. Research shows that lower-income countries with no existing social protection schemes might begin by providing basic education and health care and gradually expand their programmes to offer cash transfers or labour protections as the tax base permits.[22] Such an incremental approach is sensitive to the fiscal space available to countries at different levels of development and takes into account the country-specific challenges related to funding social protection. Reallocating current public expenditures and using the maximum available resources have also proved to be effective ways to generate fiscal space to fund social protection initiatives. Such efforts could involve assessing current budget allocations, replacing high-cost, low-impact investments with investments that can have a greater socioeconomic impact and generate greater gender equality outcomes. For instance, ILO reports that Cambodia, Costa Rica, Mauritius and Sri Lanka have reduced defence and security expenditures to increase spending in social sectors, which primarily benefit women and children.[23]

X. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to address national priorities on social protection for women

39. Member States have put in place a number of policies to ensure the provision of social security and social services, including parental leave, care services and social assistance programmes. Housing assistance and health insurance are also

[19] International Labour Organization, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trend 2015* (Geneva, 2015).

[20] The Social Protection Floor Initiative was adopted by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2009.

[21] International Labour Organization, *Conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on social protection (social security)*, International Labour Conference, one-hundredth session, PR No. 24, Report of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Social Protection (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2011).

[22] World Bank, World Development Indicators. Available from http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators (accessed 11 August 2015).

[23] International Labour Organization, *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building Economic Recovery, Inclusive Development and Social Justice* (Geneva, 2015).

important components of social protection strategies. To strengthen women's economic participation and ensure their access to social security, Jordan expanded access to maternity insurance through its 2014 Social Security Law. The law also covers the self-employed and women working in small enterprises, including those in rural areas. In Canada, the income security programmes include family benefits, a retirement income system and employment insurance benefits, which provide assistance to workers who are sick, pregnant, caring for a newborn, adopted or critically ill child or gravely ill family member, as well as a guaranteed income supplement for low-income seniors. The social security system in Cuba complies with constitutional principles of equality between men and women, ensures adequate protection to workers and their families and includes guarantees of income transfers during breaks in employment. In Norway, the national insurance scheme entitles citizens to a range of benefits, including retirement pensions, survivors' benefits, disability pensions, a work assessment allowance, occupational injury benefits, single parent benefits and sickness benefits in connection with one's own sickness or that of a child or close relative. The social security system in Spain has benefits that target women, such as pensions for widows and those who undergo legal separation or divorce; reduced social security fees for some women, to incentivize the conversion of temporary jobs into permanent jobs; increased benefits for women in occupations in which they are underrepresented; and benefits for hiring people with disabilities and women who have been the victims of violence.

40. Senegal provides free health-care services for people with disabilities, and is working to expand universal health-care coverage for young children and making caesarean sections available free of charge in some areas. Singapore believes that employability and jobs are the best forms of social protection. The country has a mandatory defined-contribution savings scheme called the Central Provident Fund, for which savings above the mandatory requirements can be transferred to a spouse. The Government also matches parents' savings for children. Togo links savings and social protection by promoting group savings and loan associations.

41. Peru has four main programmes relevant to women and social protection: an employment programme for youth living in poverty; a national programme to help children up to age 19 to access health, nutrition and education services, which provides cash transfers to households that are beneficiaries; a programme to improve housing conditions for families that lack resources or live in high-risk areas; and a pension programme for people 65 years or older who do not have access to a contributory pension system. In order to monitor social protection, Colombia has tools to collect data and analyse statistics about beneficiaries, including those with disabilities.

42. Qatar recently launched a social health insurance system that provides compulsory basic health insurance coverage for citizens, residents and visitors. The social protection strategy of Qatar provides compulsory education for both boys and girls and monthly welfare benefits to groups covered by the social insurance law (widows, divorced women, abandoned wives, disabled persons, families in need, the elderly and survivors who have lost family members). The national mental health strategy covers women's health in the framework for managing long-term illness and issues such as depression, postnatal depression and domestic violence. As part of its humanitarian response to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan provides free health-care services and maternal/child health-care services to an

estimated 620,000 Syrian refugees living within its borders. Fully 100 per cent of all births are medically supervised, and there are no reported cases of maternal deaths.

43. UN-Women supports Viet Nam in mainstreaming and monitoring gender equality objectives in the national master plan on social protection for 2012-2020. In El Salvador, UN-Women, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and ILO, launched the report entitled "Fighting inequality from the basics: the social protection floor and gender equality", which provides a framework and methodology for analysing the social protection floor in the Central America countries, namely Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama). A similar publication was initiated in Indonesia.

XI. Addressing women's unpaid care work

44. The burden of unpaid care work on women and girls continues to constrain their ability to participate equally in education and paid employment, to earn an income commensurate with that of men and to fully engage in economic and political life. Moreover, women living in poverty face multiple, overlapping and variable obstacles to their enjoyment of rights owing to the care responsibilities they assume throughout their lives. Discriminatory gender stereotypes, which define women primarily as caregivers in the home, contribute to and perpetuate this unequal distribution of work. Addressing care responsibilities remains an essential component of the obligations of States to ensure gender equality at home, at work and in society more broadly. Unpaid care work features prominently in global commitments to address gender equality, including in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the proposed sustainable development goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, because the unequal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities is both a cause and a consequence of structural inequality and thus must be addressed in order for policy interventions to have transformative impact.

45. Governments must recognize, reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls, as it puts major constraints on their time and opportunities, perpetuating their economic marginalization and preventing their enjoyment of many rights, including the rights to paid work, education and skills development. This should be achieved through national policies and in development assistance strategies that invest in care services, provide social transfers to carers, and invest in basic infrastructure, such as electricity, sanitation and piped water, that can reduce the drudgery of care work, particularly in rural environments. The recognizing and valuing of women's unpaid care work can be facilitated by regularly conducting time-use surveys to uncover and measure women's and men's unpaid work, including care work, integrate these values into the systems of national accounts and measure women's contributions to social and economic development. These initiatives, along with the preparation of household satellite accounts, are particularly useful for calculating, recognizing and making visible the contributions of women's care work to economic and social development.

XII. Measures by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work

46. Parental leave benefits enable Governments to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work and support the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities. Most countries reported having paid maternity leave systems in place, and many also have paid paternity leave benefits, such as the father's quota in Norway. In Cambodia, labour laws include provisions for female workers, including maternity leave and the obligation for enterprises employing over 100 workers to provide childcare facilitates. Recent national gender equality strategies call for increased access to day-care and community kindergarten facilities. Egypt also has labour laws with provisions for maternity leave, and Canada and Spain provide paid maternity leave benefits.

47. Access to childcare supports the reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work by women. Cuba supports women's entry into paid economic life by guaranteeing preschool education in kindergarten facilities throughout the country. Singapore aims to create enough childcare facilities to accommodate one of every two children in every housing estate by 2017. In the Dominican Republic, the Government provides subsidies for the creation of childcare centres. Recent efforts by the Government of Japan to increase childcare services and the length of parental leave help reduce and redistribute the burden of childcare within the household, but also to shift part of the care responsibility to the public sector. These efforts are also part of a broader strategy to boost female labour force participation, in part by creating and professionalizing jobs for women in the social and public sectors.

48. Countries also reduce the burden of unpaid care work by providing care services for the elderly. Singapore has weekend respite care available at nine centres across the country, and the number of nursing homes offering respite services has grown to 17. Singapore also offers caregiver training grants, which subsidize caregivers' expenses in attending training.

49. To address the issues of work and family, the Government of Spain has carried out advocacy campaigns to raise awareness and help change stereotypes about gender roles, and has implemented a programme on gender equality and reconciliation of work and family life. Similarly, Colombia has carried out advocacy campaigns to raise awareness concerning the gender division of labour in the household. Peru has a guide on best practices for the reconciliation of work and family life. In Singapore, more employers are offering flexible work arrangements to female employees.

50. Cambodia collects statistics on both paid and unpaid work, and Senegal has supported a study, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund on the contribution of women's domestic work to GDP. In Canada, the general social survey on time use provides important measures of the distribution and division of paid and unpaid work, including gender indicators on the average daily hours spent on paid work, unremunerated housework and care, as well as, as from 2015, a question on the use of technology. Peru includes unpaid work in national accounts and has a national domestic work satellite account.

XIII. Conclusions and recommendations

51. Globally, the slow economic recovery has not delivered jobs. Weaker than expected aggregate demand has lengthened the economic recovery in many countries. Jobless growth is an issue that must be urgently addressed by refocusing macroeconomic objectives on job creation and gender equality rather than price stability and fiscal consolidation. Policymakers can no longer afford to ignore women's economic activity or gender equality issues when designing and implementing macroeconomic policy, not only to generate inclusive economic growth but also to create the conditions for greater well-being.

52. Member States increasingly recognize the importance of commitments to decent work for promoting women's economic empowerment, gender equality, poverty reduction and economic development more broadly. Despite this, various policy measures will be needed to continue to remove barriers to women's entry into the labour market, including skills development, active labour market policies, adequate provisioning of social protection, guarantees regarding the rights of workers through collective bargaining and adherence to workplace norms and standards, and providing women access to productive assets.

53. Designing policies that promote gender equality will also require looking at paid and unpaid work. This means prioritizing public expenditures that lessen the burden of unpaid care work, investing in infrastructure and services, and redistributing care work by increasing the availability of quality care services and subsidies.

54. In order to promote an enabling environment for gender-responsive macroeconomic policy, ensure decent work for women, foster women's entrepreneurship, provide social protection for women and effectively support the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work, Member States are encouraged to consider the following policy measures and actions:

(a) Incorporating gender in macroeconomic analysis and the design of policy responses, and expanding the goals of macroeconomic policy to promote sustainable development, gender equality and human rights;

(b) Enhancing global macroeconomic stability through the adoption of coordinated and coherent macroeconomic policy measures that put gender equality, poverty eradication and access to decent employment for women at the forefront of economic growth objectives but also increase fiscal space to support those objectives;

(c) Promoting fiscal and monetary policies that not only help to minimize job losses in times of crisis but also accelerate recovery efforts through the multiplier effects that target women's employment;

(d) Supporting the promotion of decent employment opportunities for diverse adult and young women through the elimination of discriminatory laws and policies, the expansion of collective bargaining rights, support for equal pay legislation and other active labour market policies;

(e) Addressing gender-specific barriers to women's entrepreneurship and lack of access to entrepreneurial, technical and vocational skills;

(f) Promoting policies that increase women's participation in productive activities and access to decent work and enhance the formalization and growth of women-owned micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to social protection and financial services;

(g) Ensuring that more women are promoted to leadership positions to serve as role models and mentors to young women, and expanding mentorship programmes to provide business guidance and support to women entrepreneurs;

(h) Undertaking reforms in both the public and private sectors to increase the share of contracts awarded to women-owned small businesses;

(i) Reallocating current public expenditures and using the maximum amount of available resources to incrementally plan, design and implement a universal and gender-responsive social protection system, including social protection floors, to extend coverage to poor and vulnerable women;

(j) Promoting the recognition of unpaid care work through the collection of time-use data, time-use research on women's and girls' unpaid care burdens and the construction of satellite accounts to determine the value of unpaid care work and its contribution to the national economy;

(k) Supporting measures to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work within the household and between the household and the State through the provision of child-care services by the State or community, parental leave and flexible working arrangements, free or affordable health-care facilities and services, and quality infrastructure and time-saving technology;

(l) Regularly collecting, analysing and disseminating sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's employment and entrepreneurship, access to decent work and social protection, and monitoring the impact of associated policy measures.

55. The United Nations system and other international organizations are encouraged to support Member States in:

(a) Incorporating gender perspectives into macroeconomic policy analysis and informing the planning, design and implementation of macroeconomic policy that fosters inclusive growth and gender equality;

(b) Developing and implementing policies and programmes to promote women's access to decent employment opportunities for the enjoyment of greater human rights, better living conditions and an improved work-life balance, including for entrepreneurs and the self-employed;

(c) Developing and implementing policies and programmes to support women's entrepreneurship, in particular opportunities for new women entrepreneurs and those that lead to business expansion for existing women-owned small businesses;

(d) Mobilizing resources to design, implement and evaluate gender-responsive social protection schemes, starting with basic protection and

incrementally expanding coverage to include a wider spectrum of protection measures;

(e) **Recognizing, reducing and redistributing the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls;**

(f) **Collecting, analysing and disseminating sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's entrepreneurship, access to decent work and social protection, and the distribution and value of unpaid care work.**